

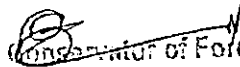
Action Taken Report on recovery of skeletal remains of elephants from two Ranges of Athgarh Division.

It is to inform you that so far 5 (Five) no of cases have been detected in Athgarh Division in which skeletal remains of five elephants have been excavated from different parts of two Ranges- Narsinghpur West Range (1 case) and Badamba Range (4 cases) of Athgarh Division. The details are as follows,

Case No 1- On dt 08.02.2022 the STF (Wildlife wing) along with Forest Dept staff excavated a site inside the Balikiary RF (Compt. No 11) of Barsingha Beat of Barsingha section of Narsinghpur West Range, wherein they recovered the body parts of a male elephant whose tusks were missing. After a thorough enquiry by ACF (Enf), Athgarh Division, it was found that the Forest Guard of the Barsingha Beat had admitted the fact of elephant death in the same area in the month of April, 2020 and its subsequent burial by them on the instructions of the Range Officer Sri. Ashok Kumar Behera. On date 15.02.2022, two nos of tusks were also recovered from the same Barsingha Beat area (hidden near a pond), allegedly belonging to the same dead elephant. Thus, the Forest Guard, Forester and Range Officer (Narsinghpur West at that time) are suspended on the charges of suppression of facts from higher authorities and dereliction in duty.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Two nos of tusks recovered on date 15.02.2022 Barsingha Beat of Narsinghpur West Range.
2. Statement of Shubhendra Kumar Bchera, Forester, Barsingha Section
3. Statement of Sunayak Mazhi, FG, Barsingha Beat, Narsinghpur West Range
4. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Ex-Range Officer, Narsinghpur West Range.
5. Statement of Hadibandhu Singh, Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range
6. Statement of Gadadhar Nayak, FG, Mitikapur Beat, Narsinghpur West Range
7. Statement of Laxmidhar Mahalik, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
8. Statement of Bibekanand Jani, Forester, i/c Guptamanik Beat, Narsinghpur West Range.
9. Statement of Panchanan Dehury. Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range


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10. Statement of Sasadeb Pradhan, Ex-Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
11. Statement of Nakula Dehury, Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range
12. Statement of Biranchi Dehury, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
13. Statement of Ajay Pradhan, local villager, Narsinghpur West Range
14. Statement of Sarat Khatua, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
15. Statement of Ramchandra Nayak, Forester, Divisional Mobile Unit.
16. Samples collected from bone marrow, ribs, putrefied skin and muscles etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case No 2- On dt 02.06.2022 the STF (Wildlife Wing) along with Forest Dept staff excavated the skeletal remains of one dead elephant from a Revenuc land adjoining Bhulubareni village in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range. The skeletal remains belong to a Male (Tusker) elephant. Also, on inspection of bones it was found that the tusks of the elephant are missing. As per opinion of the BVO, the age of tusker must be around 20 years (from the teeth structure).


One UD case No 6B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case NO 13B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba Range in the above case.

Case No 3- Again on dt 03.06.2022 the STF along with Forest Department staff of had excavated another skeletal remains of a dead elephant from a private land area near the Mahatabbandha village of same Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range. It belongs to a female elephant. On inspection of the teeth structure, the age of the elephant must be around 9 to 10 years old (from the teeth structure).

One UD case No 7B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case No 14B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba Range in the above case.

In the course of investigation, the 3 nos of Elephant Trackers and the Forest Guard (names given further) have accepted their involvement in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in both the cases. As per their statement,

- A. The poaching of one male elephant had happened near Bhulubareni village in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range in the month of Nov/Dec, 2021. After getting the information from local villagers, the Elephant Trackers and Forest Guard reached the spot and found that one male elephant has been killed by poachers and the tusks of the elephant were missing. This


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information was given to Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range. However, the elephant was buried secretly without informing any higher officers (DFO/ACFs) of Athgarh Forest Division during night time as per the directions given by Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range and Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section in presence of all the above-mentioned persons with the help of local villagers of Bhulubareni.

- B. In the month of December/January, 2021 one female elephant died due to electrocution in a private land near the paddy field in village Mahatabbandha in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range. After getting the information from the local villagers at about 2.30 pm in the afternoon, the Elephant Trackers along with Forest Guard went to the spot. This information was immediately given to Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range. As per the instructions received from them, these Elephant Trackers and Forest Guard covered the elephant with the help of straw. Later on in the night, the elephant was buried in the presence of Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range, Narendra Dchury, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Elephant Watchers and local villagers. In this case also no information was given to the higher officers (DFO/ACFs) of Athgarh Forest Division.

In relation to these above two cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in the Janipadar Beat of Badamba Range, total 7 nos of accused persons namely,

1. Ashok Kumar Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-42 years, S/o-Ramachandra Behera, At-Malatipur, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
3. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
4. Akula Behera, Age-52years, S/o-Jugala Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
5. Arjuna Behera, Age- 40 years, S/o-Krushna Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
6. Abhay Nayak, Age- 46 years, S/o-Jaya Krushna Nayak, At-Khairpanga, PO-Gopapur, PS-Badamba. (Involved in June 3rd case)


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7. Narendra Dehury, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Athgarh Division.

have been arrested & forwarded to the court of law and further investigation is still going on to arrest absconding accused persons.

In addition, 5 nos of staff namely,

1. Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range
2. Sri. Manoj Das, Forester, Mania bandha Section, Badamba Range
3. Sri. Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range
4. Sri. Narendra Dehuri, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range
5. Sri. Tanmaya Behera, Forest Guard, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range

have been suspended for lapses found in duty on their part and departmental action has been started against them.

Also, the JFMC, Badamba has been requested to issue a Non Bailable Warrant against Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range vide Letter No 2585, Dt 19.06.2022. In addition to this, the draft Departmental Proceedings against Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Manoj Das, Forester, Maniabandha Section, Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range have already been submitted to the O/o RCCF, Angul. The process for Premature Retirement of Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range have been initiated and the letter to that effect has been submitted to the O/o RCCF, Angul.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Elephant Tracker
2. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker
3. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker
4. Statement of Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range.
5. Statement of Manoj Das, Forester, Mania bandha Section, Badamba Range.
6. Statement of Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range.
7. Statement of Narendra Dehuri, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.


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8. Statement of Tanmaya Behera, Forest Guard, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range.
9. Statement of Panchanan Swain, Lincman, TPCODL, Village-Godibandh, PS-Narsingpur.
10. Statement of Saroj Mohanty, Ex Dy. RO I/C Badamba Range.
11. Statement of Akula Behera, S/o-Jugala Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
12. Statement of Arjuna Behera, S/o-Krushna Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
13. Statement of Abhay Nayak, S/o-Jaya Krushna Nayak, At-Khairpanga, PO-Gopapur, PS-Badamba.
14. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range
15. Statement of Sibanand Baral, Elephant tracker, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range
16. Statement of Kailash Jena, Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range
17. Statement of Sabita Rout, Forester, Badamba Section
18. Samples collected from bone marrow, dung, putrefied skin and muscles etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case NO 4- On dt.14.06.2022 after getting information during the investigation of the cases of recovery of two skeletons from Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range by STF, one place in Talachandragiri RF, Compt. No- I, near Bagalapatha in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range was excavated by DFO Athgarh and staff of the Division. From the spot, the body parts of a dead male elephant have been recovered (i.e., Skull, bones etc.). During the inspection of bones, it was found that the tusks of the elephant are missing. As per opinion of the VAS, Maniabandha & VAS, Satakosia Wildlife Division, the age of the tusker must be around 25+ years (from the teeth structure).

One UD case No 8B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case NO 15B has been registered in Badamba range in above Case.

In the course of investigation, the 3 nos of Elephant Trackers and the Forest Guard (names given further) were found involved in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in both the cases. As per statement given by the Elephant Trackers,


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- A. This case belongs to December/January, 2019. While patrolling inside the Tal Chandragiri RF, Compt. No- I in Janipadar Beat during day time the Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, (Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat at that time) and Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) found slightly decayed dead body of a male elephant. On careful observation they found that the tusks of the male elephant are missing. After seeing this, they came back to the Dabakhola Camp in the same Beat. On the next day, the Forest Guard took three laborers from nursery along with three Elephant Trackers with him and again went to the same spot. On reaching the spot, they have buried the elephant carcass in to the ground with the help of pickaxe and spade and came back.
- B. However, in this case it is not clear whether the Forester and other higher officers were informed about this poaching case or not by the Forest Guard as he has not has not confessed it so far.


In this case, the following staff and watcher's involvement has been found when the carcass was buried and disposed without informing the higher authorities at the time when incident occurred,

1. Ashok Kumar Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-42 years, S/o-Ramachandra Behera, At-Malatipur, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range.

They have been forwarded to the Court of Law. Also, involvement of 4 more people has been found to be involved in disposing the carcass after the poaching incident. Investigation is on to arrest the remaining accused persons.

In relation to this case Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range has been suspended for lapses in duty found on his part.

In a further development, during investigation, evidences have been found about the involvement of a notorious poacher syndicate operating in Narsinghpur and Badamba area led


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by one Babuli Mahalik in the above-mentioned poaching case. The efforts are going on to arrest the members of the syndicate.


Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Elephant Tracker
2. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker
3. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker
4. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.
5. Statement of Saroj Mohanty, Ex Dy. RO I/C Badamba Range.
6. Interrogation statement video of Dharmaraj Naik from case 7NE of 2020-21.
7. Samples collected from bone marrow, putrefied skin and muscles, ribs etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case No-5- On dt. 27.06.2022 after getting information during the investigation of the cases of recovery of three skeletons from Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range by STF, one place in Mandapa RF, near village Kusapal in Kusapal Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range was excavated by DFO Athgarh and staff of the Division in presence of all the members of Special Investigation Team (SIT). From the spot, the body parts of a dead elephant have been recovered (i.e., Skull, bones etc.). During the inspection of bones, it was found that the bones are in a decomposed state. Hence it is difficult to ascertain the sex of the elephant. However, no tusks or tussets were recovered from the site. As per the opinion of the Expert members of the SIT the age of the elephant must be around 40+ years (From the teeth structure).

One UD case No 10B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba range in above Case.

In the course of investigation, the 4 nos of Elephant Trackers (names given further) who were involved in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in the case. As per statement given by the Elephant Trackers,


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A. The elephant had died probably in the month of Nov/Dec of 2018. The Kailash Jena, Elephant Tracker had received the information regarding death of one elephant in Mandap RF of Kusapal Beat at around 1 PM in the afternoon. This information was immediately given to Akhya Pradhan, Forester Gopapur Section (At the time of incident) and Sushant Chandra Lenka, FG, Gopapur Beat (At the time of incident). After getting the information Akhya Pradhan, Sushant Chandra Lenka proceeded to the spot.

After coming back from the spot, they both took along Elephant Trackers namely,

1. Kailash Jena alias Ganesh, Elephant Trackers, Badamba Sadar Section, Village- Khairpanga, PS – Badamba
2. Nidhi Sahoo, Elephant Tracker, Gopapur Beat, Village- Dalcimaru, PS- Badamba
3. Chandrashekhar Mohanty, Elephant Tracker, Gopapur Beat, Village- Malati, PS- Badamba

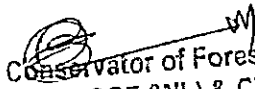
On reaching the spot at around 7 PM in the evening, they saw that elephant trackers namely,

1. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Pravat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- FG I/C Kusapal Beat, Badamba Range

were already present on the spot.

B. The elephant carcass was already in putrefied condition with maggot growth. Also, they could not identify the sex of the elephant. However, it was an adult elephant carcass. After this, these eight people buried the elephant carcass in to the ground with the help of pickaxe and spade and came back at around 4 AM in the morning.

C. However, in this case it is not clear whether the Range Officer and other higher officers were informed about this elephant death case or not by the Forester as he is no more (succumbed to covid in April 2021).


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- D. Also, the Sushant Chandra Lenka, FG, Gopapur Beat (At the time of incident), now Forester is undergoing training in the Training Institute, Champua. One Summon Letter has been sent to him through Director, Training Institute Champua for attending the enquiry before the undersigned.
- E. Also, Summon Letter has been sent to Sri. Gobind Chandra Rath, Ex- Range Officer, Badamba Range (at the time of incident), now serving in Cuttack Division through DFO, Cuttack Forest Division.

In this case, the following accused persons have already been forwarded to the Court of Law in the cases of recovery of elephant skeletons from Janipadar Beat on 2nd, 3rd & 14th June 2022,

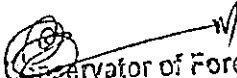
1. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range

Also, involvement of 3 more people has been found to be involved in disposing the carcass after the poaching incident. Investigation is on to arrest the remaining accused persons.

In relation to this case Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range has already been suspended for lapses in duty found on his part.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker, Badamba Range.
2. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker, Badamba Range.
3. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.
4. Statement of Kailash Jena, Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range
5. Statement of Nidhi Sahoo, Ex-Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range


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6. Bone samples collected like hip bones, vertebra, ribs, lower mandible femur etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Constitution of Special Investigation Team (SIT)


To probe the cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in Athgarh Forest Division a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the supervision of Chief Conservator of Forests, State Wildlife Headquarters and under Chairmanship of Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul, including Conservator of Forests from State Wildlife Headquarters and one officer from Special Task force (STF) of Odisha Police have been constituted by Government vide No. 10637 Dtd.16.06.2022.

On 27.06.2022 the SIT along with two expert members from OUAT and centurion University had made a field visit and body parts of one elephant was recovered in Kusapal Beat of Badamba Range of Athgarh Division by the SIT and Forest Staff during the visit. The team also visited the 4 spots of recovery of body part in Athgarh Division.

On 08.07.2022, the SIT have interrogated three incumbent DFOs of Athgarh Division regarding death of wild elephants in Athgarh Division.

One habitual poacher involved in elephant poaching in Athgarh, Boudh and Nayagarh Division area have been arrested by Forest staff of Athgarh Division.

Further investigation by the SIT is continuing.


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